



# Town of Berwyn Heights

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**MAYOR**  
Stephen D. Isler  
**COUNCIL MEMBERS**  
Jason W. Papanikolas (Mayor Pro Tem)  
Amanda M. Dewey  
Jeffrey Jay Osmond  
Ethan D. Sweep

## Worksession Minutes October 21, 2019 | 7:00 pm

Present were Mayor Stephen Isler, Mayor, Councilmembers (CMs) Amanda Dewey, Ethan Sweep, and Jeffrey Jay Osmond. Mayor Pro Tempore (MPT) Jason Papanikolas had an excused absence. Also present were Clerk Kerstin Harper, Assistant to the Town Manager Yvonne Odoi, and citizens. Town Manager (TM) Maria Broadbent had an excused absence.

### 1. Announcements

The Education Advisory Committee (BHEAC) will hold a listening session/ focus group for middle and high school students and their parents on October 28. Councilmembers had fun judging the Trunk or Treat event last Saturday. The Police Department and the Volunteer Fire Department participated with a creatively decorated car and truck.

### 2. Discussion Items

**MNCPPC zoning update:** Mayor Isler welcomed Master Planner Chad Williams to give an overview of the Prince George's zoning rewrite. Mr. Williams said the County adopted a new zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations for the first time in 40 years. The process took 4 1/2 years but will not be effective until a county-wide map amendment has been approved about a year from now. The map amendment will apply the new zones to property.

The new zoning ordinance has simplified the land uses found in the County from around 1200 to around 250, which are more flexible and easier to use. They are intended to diversify the County's tax base and bring in new investment. Design standards were upgraded to ensure more high-quality development.

A Guide to New Zones, adopted by the County Council, prescribes the process by which new zones will be applied to the old zones. For the most part, the zones will remain the same with only about 3% being rezoned. The rezoned areas are mixed-use zones, such as transit-oriented development and activity centers, as well a Route 1 Innovation Corridor, which includes Route 193 to Hannover Parkway.

The Planning Department is doing outreach to inform everyone about the map amendment through website, social media and open houses. The nearest event to Berwyn Heights is on November 7 at College Park Airport. In addition, planning staff will give a briefing to any municipality or civic group that requests it. In March 2020, the Planning Board and County Council will hold a joint public hearing on the proposed zoning map, at which people can testify. Through the summer, the County

Council will hold a series of worksessions on the map amendment and then a 2<sup>nd</sup> public hearing around September, with a final approval anticipated for late October early November 2020. After that the map amendment will go into effect.

Mr. Williams then demonstrated the proposed new zone comparison map, which can be accessed at [zoningpgc.pgplanning.com](http://zoningpgc.pgplanning.com). Here people can see the new zone for their property or neighborhood using a zoning swipe tool or typing in an address. In Berwyn Heights proper, there are few changes: the residential zone will remain residential, designated as RS65; the business district will become commercial general office or CGO; the light industrial properties along Ballew Avenue will become an industrial employment or RE zone; and open space will become agricultural preservation. To the north of Berwyn Heights, the metropolitan center will become regional transit district and with high intensity zoning. Greenbelt Station and Beltway Plaza will become mixed use and commercial zones, respectively.

**Census 2020:** CM Dewey requested the Council to discuss the decennial census that will take place in spring 2020. The Census will determine government representation as well funding for a variety of federal and local programs. It is therefore important to get as close to a complete count as possible. Prince George's County calculates that for every person not counted it loses approximately \$18,000 over 10 years. CM Sweep noted that there is an under-count of young children in Prince George's County, which results in schools being underfunded. Further, residents should be assured that the Census is strictly confidential and personal data will be kept private.

The Council discussed ideas on how to increase participation in the 2020 Census. Ideas included:

- Town hosting a Census Day event on April 1, and making computers in the Senior Center available to take the Census online;
- Encouraging local schools to hold a Census Day of their own allowing parents to use their computers, while serving a light meal and providing activities for students; CM Dewey offered to raise the idea with the PTA and the BHEAC.
- Developing a social media campaign around the Census;
- Town staff wearing Census 2020 t-shirts and putting stickers or flags on their trucks;
- Town departments coming up with additional ideas to advertise the Census;
- Town advertising Census jobs opening now.

In addition, the Council agreed that Census publicity should highlight the different ways in which the Census can be taken (online, by mail, and in door to door survey), as well as the starting and end dates. All Census related information can be found at the website [www.census2020.gov](http://www.census2020.gov). The Council plans to continue discussing the Census at future worksessions.

**Legislative Dinner agenda:** Mayor Isler said the Town's legislative dinner is scheduled for November 6, 6:00 p.m. at the Greenbelt Crowne Plaza hotel. A draft agenda has been provided. It includes a list of Berwyn Heights priorities, e.g. Sports Park, Dog Park, Census 2020 Complete Count, Educational Involvement, and Stormwater Management Projects. CM Dewey asked to add Pepco vegetation management legislation to the agenda, and Mayor Isler the repeal of the pit bull ban. Assistant to the Town Manager Odoi said the Administration Department would like to discuss possible state funding for Town Center improvements, including a new roof, elevator replacement, emergency generator power panel reconfiguration, and adding bathrooms for G. Love Room. The Council had no objections.

**Four Cities agenda:** Mayor Isler said the next Four Cities meeting will take place on October 23 in New Carrollton. The Town of Berwyn Heights portion of the agenda has the repeal of the pit bull ban. No other items were added. CM Dewey asked whether BHPD could provide a short memorandum on Berwyn Heights' purchase of hybrid police interceptors, which New Carrollton plans to bring up.

**MML debrief:** CM Osmond reported that he took many of the Academy's core courses towards certification. He found the workshop on the Structure of Municipal Government most interesting. He learned that a municipal government does not always function the way it is organized. CM Dewey said she also took this workshop. What stood out to her was the discussion on the municipal charter, its import and meaning and the difference to other parts of the municipal code. She also attended a workshop on walking and biking infrastructure, which gave insight on the different types of amenities available and opportunities for learning what other municipalities are doing in this area.

### **3. Town Council -e-newsletter**

Mayor Isler said he did not have time to work on the newsletter because of the demands of his teaching job. He will strive to compose a newsletter for November.

### **4. Minutes**

The Council reviewed the September 16 worksession. CM Sweep moved, and CM Dewey seconded to adopt the minutes. The motion passed 4 to 0.

### **5. Department Reports**

Mayor Isler thanked everyone who came out for Trunk or Treat. Upcoming events include the Police Department's 'Cocoa with a Popo' community event and the Tree Lighting. He reminded drivers to slow down for walkers and bikers, and bikers to obey the traffic laws.

CM Sweep said he attended the Trunk or Treat event and was impressed by the elaborate decorations of the cars. Further, there was an incident this morning during which a driver swore and spat at a Public Works employee because she could not pass a crewman who was collecting the trash. He finds this behavior unacceptable and asked everyone to be patient when being held up by trash trucks.

CM Dewey said she had fun at Trunk or Treat and saw many cute costumes. Prizes went to a 'Banana' as the funniest, a 'Unicorn' as the cutest, and a 'Skeleton' as the scariest costumes. Upcoming events include a special after-Halloween Town cleanup, where prizes will be awarded for most trash collected. For this event, the Green Team is partnering with the Volunteer Fire Department to dispose of used jack-o-lanterns. Participants can drop their pumpkins from the fire truck onto a tarp if they make a donation to the BHVFD. The smashed pumpkins will be composted at the community garden. In addition, the Green Team will sponsor a social media contest about keeping Halloween green. CM Dewey concluded with an announcement of upcoming events.

### **6. Town Council Schedule**

The Council reviewed the upcoming Town Council schedule. No changes were made.

### **7. Citizens Discussion**

Phil Ventura commented that he always gets a lot of trick or treaters on Halloween. This is one of the events in which Latino families like to participate. Many children are dressed in home-made costumes reminding him of the olden days. Mr. Ventura also noted that TM Broadbent announced at the last Town meeting that department directors will no longer attend every Town meeting but may attend

quarterly. He cautioned the Council to not allow such decisions to be made for them. Residents like to see the directors and hear from them directly.

Mayor Isler and CM Dewey replied that Councilmembers were apprised of the proposal before the Town meeting and gave their approval, and also discussed the proposal at a previous worksession. It was felt that the reading of statistical reports does not tell the Council a lot about what is being accomplished. Instead, the directors will be asked to attend worksessions to give updates on projects they are assigned to carry out based on the Council's priorities. If residents have a concern or a question about a department issue, they would like a director to address, the director can be asked to come in and report. If the Council concludes that the new arrangement does not work, it can always be changed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Signed: *Kerstin Harper*, Town Clerk